



October 3, 2008

Dear Business Owner and Manager:

At their meeting on August 12, 2008 the City Council went on record supporting the elimination of foam and solid polystyrene food service ware; encouraging all restaurants and take out food vendors to switch to reusable, biodegradable and recyclable materials. At the October 28<sup>th</sup> meeting, the City Council will consider a Sustainable Food Service Ware Ordinance that would make these prohibitions mandatory—though it would not take affect for at least six months. This is the second notice sent to all impacted businesses to explain the proposed ordinance and solicit any feedback.

Polystyrene is one of the most commonly encountered items that litter our streets, sidewalks, parks, creeks, storm drains and the Bay. Unlike paper-based products, polystyrene does not decompose once it becomes litter. Instead it breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces, commonly ingested by wildlife. When ingested by an animal, the result is reduced appetite, reduced nutrient absorption and starvation. Moreover, there is evidence that benzene and styrene—toxic chemicals that are partially comprise polystyrene—may leach from containers. For these reasons, the City Council is urging, and will soon require through ordinance, a transition to alternative biodegradable and recyclable food service ware.

As currently written, the Sustainable Food Service Ware Ordinance would prohibit food service vendors from using foam or solid polystyrene disposable food service ware. The ordinance also states that all food service ware will be required to be biodegradable, reusable or recyclable unless the food vendor can show that there is no available alternative for a specific application. The ordinance applies to such establishments as restaurants, grocery store delis, hotels, bars, coffee shops, cafes, mobile food vendors as well as city departments and facilities. Food service ware items include all containers, bowls, plates, trays, cartons, cups, lids, straws, utensils and similar items with the resin identification code #6 on the bottom.

If adopted, the ordinance would ban the use of all foam polystyrene (commonly called Styrofoam®) within six months. This includes white or colored clamshell type containers, plates, cups and bowls. Six months after that, use of solid polystyrene will also be prohibited. Solid polystyrene typically includes clear clamshell containers, straws, lids and utensils. Acceptable items include recyclable materials such as paper, aluminum and plastic with resin identification #'s 1, 2, 4 and 5; as well as biodegradable products made from corn, potatoes, sugar cane waste and other agricultural products.

Once the ordinance is adopted, City staff will work closely with affected businesses to provide supportive services such as information on acceptable alternatives, distributors and suppliers as well as a sounding board for questions about the ordinance itself.

Also included is a brief overview of the ordinance and a listing of Sustainable Food Service Ware products. **Please contact the Public Works Department by no later than October 10, 2008 to have your comments included in the report to the City Council.** Comments or questions may be made via telephone at (650) 616-7065, fax at (650) 794-1443 or by email to [jshannon@sanbruno.ca.gov](mailto:jshannon@sanbruno.ca.gov). To view the entire draft ordinance online, please visit [http://sanbruno.ca.gov/pw\\_main.html](http://sanbruno.ca.gov/pw_main.html). Comments can also be made in person during the City Council meeting at 1555 Crystal Springs Road, at 7:00 p.m. on October 28, 2008.

Sincerely,

Jim Shannon  
Management Analyst